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ABSTRACT

Development of the mature person is a necessary theme for educational design in contemporary society. A structured definition of the term "maturity" is needed which can be applied to the design of educational experience. The author suggests that there are six criteria of maturity: intelligence, responsiblity, articulation, empathy, sexuality, and philosophy. Students (and adults) must continually grow in these areas in order to properly develop their maturity. At the same time, the educational system must have goals to help students acquire and refine skills of fluency or literacy, analysis and evaluation, and persistence in solving problems of all kinds. In designing curriculum to effectively promote the development of maturity, educators must consider how any given subject area relates to the six criteria of maturity and the major educational goals. For example, how would the ability to analyze historical data contribute to the student's development of articulation? How would the disposition to use mathematics contribute to the student's development of intelligence? Curriculum development which thoroughly considers all aspects of the human condition will succeed in promoting maturity. (Author/AV)

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1.

A CURRICULUM PROPOSAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MATURITY IN STUDENTS.*

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If growth in the maturity of individuals of a society does not keep pace with their physical powers, if every increase in their power is not matched by an increase in their maturity, they and their culture perish. -- James John Jelinek, in Principles and Values in School and Society. (1)

Throughout most of my professional career, covering a span of more than five decades, the main approach of educational research has been to divide to conquer. By way of this approach research workers in education have amassed an enormous stockpile of classified information -- facts regarding everything from the behavior of pigeons in a structured environment to the behavior of the human mind confronted with a problem.

Now, however, during these troubled times of school vandalism, violence, racism, sexism, and the like, educational research is ready for a new approach, that of uniting to conquer. The fragmented human being, fragmented for purposes of minute and accurate research, is being once more made whole. A process of reintegration is underway as the theme of developing the mature person comes to the center of attention.

Previous movements for the development of the mature mind, the mature person, have suffered a sad fate. For the most part they have degenerated into sentimentalizing and moralizing. The difficulty with the term "maturity" is that it invites sentimentality, exhortation, and rhetoric, rather than concerted action, as is plainly observable in the writings of the educational romantics since 1960. If we are not to lose our present opportunity to invent a curriculum for the development of maturity in students during these troublesome times in education, we shall have to confront the term "mature" in a way that invites action. That is the purpose of this presentation -- to offer a structure for the term that can be applied to the design of educational experience. If the design is useful, educators will have in their possession the means for working out the application of the term in

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their day-by-day work and researchers will have in their possession the independent and dependent variables basic to the reintegration of knowledge in their field. Even more importantly, the chances that the curriculum for the development of maturity will once more dissolve into sentimentality will have been substantially reduced.

Criteria of Maturity.

The first task of this presentation, then, is to spell out the six aspects/categories/criteria of maturity -- Intelligence, Articulation, Responsibility, Empathy, Sexuality, Philosophy. (2)

Intelligence. The human being is born ignorant. At birth he is ignorant not only of specific cultural skills, but even of his own survival needs. The fact of the matter is that he will not survive even his infancy unless he learns to become intelligent -- to behave in terms of an anticipation of consequences.

The person who takes it for granted that his present store of knowledge is sufficient for the rest of his life is not mature. His responses to new situations are inadequate for his survival and his mind develops rigidities of dogma and pride that make it into an unchanging anomaly in a changing world.

Relationships between behaviors and their consequences are the kinds of relationships the person must progressively build with his world if he is to develop mental, emotional, and social maturity. When he fails to build and to go on building this relationship, it is as Thorndike made clear, an arrestment to be attributed partly to reasons within himself and partly to reasons outside himself.

The first criterion, then, for maturity is, "Is the person becoming increasingly more intelligent -- is he becoming increasingly more adept at behaving in terms of consequences?"

Responsibility. The human being is born unresponsible. However, not many years pass before the helpless infant can grow into a child progressively capable of self-help and of help to others.

He learns that his me-element is best enhanced not as much by taking from others as from giving to others. He learns that other individuals have a right to expect him to do his share of the common enterprise and that he in turn has a right to expect others to do their share in that enterprise.

For him to mature is for him progressively to accept the fact that the human experience is a shared experience and the human predicament is a shared predicament.

In short, the child progressively learns responsibility.

The second criterion, then, for maturity is, "Is the person becoming increasingly more responsible?"

Articulation. The human being is born inarticulate. As he matures, he builds word--referent relationships between himself and his world.

In no area of maturing is arrestment more common than in the area of communication. Arrestment in this area is so common that it is not even noticed; it is taken for granted as natural.

Some individuals, however, are so able to portray the referents of their world -- with confidence, precision, beauty, and sensitivity -- that their communicatory experiences hold for them more of success than of failure.

Communication is that through which we most constantly influence one another. Communication is a maker of psychological universes. Through it we clarify our ideas and beliefs and transmit knowledge and experience.

The third criterion, then, for maturity is, "Is the person becoming increasingly more articulate?"

Sexuality. The human being is born with diffuse sexuality. As he matures he grows toward a specific and creative sexual relationship.

Sexual immaturity of one sort or another is still, like immaturity in communication, so prevalent as to seem normal. Sex nature goes through stages of development before it reaches maturity. Because of some emotional experience, it might be arrested at any one of these stages.

Sexual behaviors do not rise far above or fall far below the level of nonsexual behaviors. Sex is one way through which character is expressed. A person whose sexual behavior is marked by a will to dominate and exploit others is not a person who has a mature approach to equality in other areas. While it is true that a traumatic sex experience can so arrest development that a person's whole relationship with his world is distorted, it is likewise true that a traumatic experience in some other area of life has a similar effect that expresses itself through the channel of sexual behavior.

The fourth criterion, then, for maturity is, "Is the person increasingly developing a specific sexuality?"

Empathy. The human being is born self-centered. One of the most important phases of maturing is that of developing from self-centering to an understanding relationship with others, from egocentricity to sociocentricity.

A person is mature when he has both an ability and a willingness to do unto those others as he would have them do to him. Without the tempering of self-centeredness there is not mutual support, common purpose, or structured reliance of person upon person. To do unto others as you would have them do unto you is to feel their feelings as you do your own. This is empathy.

The fifth criterion, then, for maturity is, "Is the person becoming increasingly more empathetic?"

Philosophy. The individual is born in a world of isolated particulars. The newborn child has as yet no experience of wholeness, that is, of parts significantly related to one another. He senses this satisfaction, this pain, this fear, or this anger, but he does not know or understand the independent variables for these dependent variables.

The development of maturity begins when things begin to hang together, when the child begins to learn what follows from what. Out of heterogeneous data, the child begins to build coherent expectations. In brief, he begins to develop a philosophy of life. As he grows the areas in which things hang together become larger and more complex. Life is a process of entering into, as well as creating, wholes of meaning. The whole lifts the isolated particular into its full significance. As the power to lift the part into the whole is developed, the relationship to life is philosophical.

The sixth criterion, then, for maturity is, "Is the person increasingly developing wholes of meaning -- is he becoming increasingly more philosophical?"

5.

Goals of Teaching.

Let us turn now from the six aspects/categories/criteria of the mature mind, the mature person, to another matter -- the goals of teaching held by practicing teachers. Basically, there are three of these. (3)

Fluency. The first of these goals is that of fluency. Teachers want to help their students to become fluent -- to recognize the symbol systems, the phenomena, the data, or the media that constitute the domain of subject matter -- in reading, to recognize words; in art, to recognize properties of media; in geography, to interpret maps, and so on.

Manipulation. The second of the goals is manipulation. Teachers want to help their students to learn to manipulate the symbol systems, phenomena, data, or media in such a way as to gain meaning. In the sense used here, to manipulate means to apply, to analyze, to synthesize, and/or to evaluate.

Persistence. The third of the goals of the practicing teacher is persistence. Teachers hope that students, having learned to be fluent in a given field and having learned to manipulate it in such a way as to get meaning from it, will persist in carrying on their activities in the field. Having learned to read intelligently, the student, it is hoped, will continue to do so, and having learned to think like a historian, the student, it is hoped, will continue to do so on his own. Persistence, then, is expressed as voluntary behavior, perhaps as play.

The Curriculum Proposal.

If one takes the three basic goals of teaching and places them in relation to the six aspects/categories/criteria of maturity, a grid with eighteeen cells is formed:

	Fluency.	Manipulation.	Persistence.
Intelligence.	1a	2a	3a
Articulation.	1b	2b	3b
Responsibility.	1c	2c	3c
Empathy.	1d	2d	3d
Sexuality.	1e	2e	3e
Philosophy.	1f	2f	3f

We come now to the central proposition of this paper: To attain a curriculum for the development of maturity in students, each subject and experience must be related to all aspects of the human condition in the context of all the pedagogical intentions of the teacher.

That is to say, to be conceived in terms of the development of maturity, a given subject area must be perceived in terms of its bearing on intelligence, articulation, responsibility, empathy, sexuality, and philosophy. If it fails to respond to any one of these aspects of the human condition it is less than adequate and inconsistent with the pedagogical needs of this century.

To put it all differently, for the curriculum to promote maturity in students, it must respond to eighteen questions at every point. Each of the questions takes the following form: In what sense does the independent variable "PG" (Pedagogical Goal) influence dependent variable "MC" (Maturity Category)? The following are examples:

How does the ability to manipulate historical data contribute to the student's development of articulation (Cell 2b)? How does the disposition to use mathematics contribute to the student's development of intelligence (Cell 3a)? How does the recognition of musical symbols contribute to the student's development of a philosophy (Cell 1f)?

It is easy to observe that some questions inherent in the grid are much less familiar and therefore more difficult than others. We simply know less about some matters than we do about others. For example, we are more familiar with the question inherent in Cell 1a (How does fluency contribute to intellectual growth?) than we are with questions inherent in such cells as 2f, 3d, 1e, and the like.

Yet teachers who are vital, enthusiastic, memorable are the ones who make use of all the aspects of the human condition in most of what they teach. It is possible to have a curriculum for the development of

maturity in students, if we will but conceive it so. To do so is not to engage in some of the more overt and fadistic changes we have undertaken from time to time, but rather to renew the curriculum in terms of its deepest and most important meanings. It is to be hoped we will attempt to develop increasingly greater maturity in ourselves as indeed we attempt to develop it in our students.

Documentations.

1. James John Jelinek, Principles and Values in School and Society, Far Western Philosophy of Education Society, Tempe, Arizona, 1976, p. 23.

2. H. A. Overstreet, The Mature Mind, W. W. Norton, New York, New York, 1949, pp. 42-76.

3. Arthur W. Foshay, "Toward a Humane Curriculum," in Education in Flux -- Implications for Curriculum Development, edited by James John Jelinek, Professors of Curriculum, Tempe, Arizona, 1979, pp. 97-113.